

WORSHIP AT HOME

These sheets are intended for you to use at the time when we would normally be worshipping in church so that we can 'be together whilst apart'. Why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you?



22 MARCH 2020

Opening Prayer

As I come before you Jesus, open my eyes that I might truly see you as my shepherd, comforter, and redeemer. I want to be with others worshipping you but this is not possible, yet I know that I am being prayed for as part of the community of faith. Thank you for this time where I remember you are with me. Amen.

Hymn: Amazing Grace (Singing the Faith 440)

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tvt6E9N7AQw>

- 1 **Amazing grace -- how sweet the sound --
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.**
- 2 **God's grace has taught my heart to fear,
his grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!**
- 3 **Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
God's grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.**
- 4 **The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.**
- 5 **And, when this heart and flesh shall fail
and mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil
a life of joy and peace.**
- 6 **When we've been there ten thousand years
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we first begun.**

John Newton (1725-1807) (alt.)

Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 440

Let us pray together

Lord, I worship you today. Help me to see your calling in my life.

Open my eyes to what is possible when I see things through the eyes of your Son.

Forgive what is passed, protect me from all that is to come

Today's Reading from the Old Testament 1

Samuel 16: 1-13

Today's Gospel Reading: John 9:1-41

"Jesus heard that they had thrown him [the blind man] out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him " John 9:35-38

Time to Reflect

"Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come; God's grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home. The Lord has promised good to me, his word my hope secures; he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures".

Thoughts from a member of the Methodist Connexional team:

When I was a teenager, I went through Confirmation Exercises in the local Anglican Church. I remember thinking how wonderful that Jesus would go through what he went through for the whole world. I was saddened and shocked by the way he was treated by not only his fellow Jews but also by the Romans. It wasn't until several years later that I realized Jesus died for me personally, not just the whole world. It was for my sin too that Jesus had died. It was as if the scales fell off my eyes and I could finally see clearly. The Pharisees were becoming

increasingly hostile toward Jesus, so hearing of this miracle, they cross questioned the man who was born blind. In verse 24 and 25, they summon the man and say, "Swear to God to tell us the truth! We know the man who healed you is a sinful man! Do you agree?" The healed man replied, "I have no idea what kind of man he is. All I know is that I was blind and now I can see for the first time in my life!"

Our youngest grandchild, Theo was diagnosed with many health-related problems. Developmentally he was delayed and although almost two years old now, he is not speaking, although making noises. He is beginning to pull himself up and walk holding on to the sidewalls. However, what made the biggest difference in Theo's life was finding out he needed glasses. My daughter, Joyce sent us a video of Theo donning his red framed plastic glasses. We saw him seeing and focusing on his mother's face. His countenance beamed, as he was able to register what he was looking at for probably the first time in his young life.

The blind man looking at Jesus' face said, "Lord, I believe." He could now see not only others and the world around him, but he could see Jesus clearly. Contemplate on when you have seen Jesus, not just as a good teacher, or as an historical person but as the One who knows you, loves you, and hears your every prayer.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

**All seeing, all knowing God I call on you today.
May your Spirit give your world a sense of calm
and peace in these difficult times.**

**On this Mothering Sunday, we pray for all
Mums. The good ones and the not so good. We
remember all those who would have liked to
have children but for whatever reason could
not.**

**We pray for your church in this time of
uncertainty:**

**For those people who are worried about leaving
their home and those who cannot.**

**For those needing to make decisions in order to
care for other.**

We pray for carers, doctors and nurses.

**We continue to pray for those who will feel
more isolated by not being able to attend and
act of worship today.**

I especially want to pray for

**Holy God,
Present with us now, guide me in all I do and say –
that it might reflect your love for the world.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen**

**The Lord's Prayer
Our Father**

Hymn: Listen to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Hrh4lMgn-g> or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

Lord, I commit myself to you today. At the end of this day, may I see you more clearly and love you more dearly, and follow you closer. **Amen.**

Original Materials by Heather Wilson and Paul Wood

Opening Prayer

I come to you today, Lord, trying to make sense of all that is happening as the things to which we cling for security slip from my grasp. God of new life, God of risen hope, may I hold on to your resurrection power and the knowledge that our community of faith is praying with and for me. No matter what, may I worship you this day and every day in spirit and in truth. Amen

**Hymn: BREATHE ON ME BREATH OF GOD
Sing/read/pray/listen**

Breathe on me, Breath of God;
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what thou dost love,
And do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, breath of God,
Until my heart is pure,
Until with thee I will one will,
To do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly thine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
So shall I never die,
But live with thee the perfect life
Of thine eternity.

Let us pray together:

Living Lord Jesus. let us draw near to worship you.

Let the same Spirit that brought Lazarus out of the grave and raised you to new life dwell in us today.

Forgive my lack of trust. Forgive me when I believe my timing is better than yours.
Forgive me, Lord, and renew my hope and confidence, for you never abandon us. Amen

Today's Old Testament reading: Ezekiel 37: 1-14

Today's Gospel reading:
John 11: 1-45

Time to reflect



'I don't want their sympathy.' At times of tragedy, words of sympathy sound hollow or trite. And our feelings of sympathy can be fleeting – they claim our attention for a short while till the next terrible news story pushes them out. Sympathy works for what we might call the 'six second attention span generation. It might be a tweet with the right hashtag or perhaps sending a card with a sad bear on it. We pop it in the post and move on, our sympathy duly expressed. How deep does our sympathy really go?

Many people confuse sympathy with empathy, but they are different. Empathy is putting yourself in the shoes of another; actually experiencing and sharing in their feelings. You won't see a 'with deepest empathy' card in the shops because empathy doesn't send a card. Empathy sits up all night listening to a friend as she talks through her dilemma with you. Empathy cooks dinner and takes it round to the young single mum being harassed by her former partner. Empathy is signing up to Nightstop and providing overnight accommodation for a young person whose been thrown out of their family home because his stepfather doesn't want him there. Empathy costs you. It moves you to get waist-deep, to be involved, while sympathy, safely sealed in an envelope, looks on, feeling 'so sad for you'.

In the beautiful scene from today's gospel reading Jesus is so outraged and upset by the death of his friend, Lazarus, that he reacts physically. He is 'shuddering and shaking with emotion' – the feelings we can well recall if we've been faced with the death of

someone close to us. We're told that he weeps – but his emotions run much deeper – grief and loss can be a physical sensation, a blow felt in the pit of your stomach. Here we see Jesus at his most human. He loves Mary, Martha and Lazarus. So he persists in the face of the things that would try to deter him. When they first heard that Lazarus was sick, his disciples had urged him not to go back to Judea, fearing the fierce hostility there. When Jesus reaches Bethany, Martha is unable to grasp what he is saying and what he is about to do. The mourners are irritated that that Jesus did nothing to prevent Lazarus dying. Martha worries about opening the grave because the body will have decayed. No-one understands. No wonder Jesus is troubled. He sees evidence of death all about and knows that its power is still very much in place. He sees the opposition that cannot tolerate the giving of life, the religious authorities who are threatened by his transforming deeds. Like the moment when he kneels in Gethsemane, he confronts the forces set against him and which test his own vocation. No-one grasps that having seen the weeping, human Jesus, they are now about to catch a glimpse of the fact that in Jesus is the life-giving power of God. The strength of his empathy towards them moves him to tears and then compels him to take action despite the likely personal cost. And the extent of his empathy with our human condition is such that it will take him to the Cross. In Jesus, we meet a God who does more than send a letter of sympathy. He is not remote being who sympathises with the plight of humankind from up in heaven. In Jesus we see a God who becomes human and crosses over to where we are, who gets involved. A God whose empathy is so deep that his only desire is to save us from the darkness of death and separation from God by taking these on himself. A God who, having wept over Lazarus and raised him from the dead, travels himself to the deepest

agony of the world's most painful desolation and loss – but then rises again to demonstrate the truth of his declaration and promise for us all, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'

A time of prayer

Cut out or draw some teardrop shapes on paper. Think about a person or place that weeps with sadness and needs fresh hope, and God's resurrection power. Be still and quiet, holding your teardrops before God. Then say, 'Thank you God that you weep with us as you wept with Martha and Mary. Comfort us as we comfort others. Bring restored hope to those we hold before you today. May they know your resurrection power. Amen

Hymn: Say or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind.

Blessing

As we wait on you, Lord God, renew our strength, our hope and our vision to be your arms in this world, reaching out and enfolding with your love all those whom we meet this week.

God of hope, heal me and restore me that I might know your resurrection power in my life. Amen

WORSHIP AT HOME

5 APRIL 2020

PALM SUNDAY AND HOLY WEEK

Lord Jesus, I come to worship you as our liberator and peacemaker who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Help me to walk with you not only in the triumph of Palm Sunday but all the way to the Cross. Amen

Hymn: ALL GLORY, LAUD AND HONOUR

To be said, sung or prayed

- 1 All glory, laud, and honour
To thee, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring!
Thou art the King of Israel,
Thou David's royal Son,
Who in the Lord's name comest,
The King and Blessèd One.
- 2 The company of angels
Are praising thee on high,
And mortal men and all things
Created make reply.
The people of the Hebrews
With palms before thee went;
Our praise and prayer and anthems
Before thee we present.
- 3 To thee before thy Passion
They sang their hymns of praise;
To thee now high exalted
Our melody we raise.
Thou didst accept their praises;
Accept the prayers we bring,
Who in all good delightest,
Thou good and gracious King.
- 4 All glory, laud, and honour
To thee, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring!

Let us pray together:

Lord Jesus, Lamb of God,
when you walked this
earth you did not consider
heavenly equality though
it was yours to choose but
took the rough nails of our
sin to be hamered into
your hands for the sake of
our salvation. And so it is that I acknowledge
you as Lord of my life and Lord of all, to the
glory of God the Father, Son and Spirit.
May I be listening always for your familiar
voice and obedient to your call, whether
quiet whisper in a sacred space or thunder's
roar cutting through the racket of a busy
street. Forgive me for the times you ask me
to stay alert for your sake and, eyes heavy,
like the disciples, I fall asleep. Forgive me my
Gethsemane moments. Amen



Reading: Matthew 26:14-27:66 – You may want to read a portion of this each day of Holy Week, ending on Good Friday

Time to Reflect

People turn to God, notoriously, when there is something they want very badly. Bishop Tom Wright likens it to learning to use the phone only when you need to call an ambulance – it would have been sensible to find out earlier when it wasn't so critical. But that's how people are – church attendance goes up when a major crisis strikes (so it's frustrating that we can't offer that opportunity in our present circumstances). Suddenly everyone wants Jesus, in the terms of this story, to ride into the city and become the sort of king they want him to be. Give us peace, now! Let me win the lottery today so I can pay my bills! Save the life of my sick child and do it right away! Give me a job by this time tomorrow. And, perhaps the most common prayer of all – simply 'Help!' And when we don't get the answers we want, our cheers turn to jeers, too, and we turn our backs, disappointed, even if we don't bay for his death.

Jesus would meet the expectations of the people who celebrated his arrival in Jerusalem— but not in the way they thought they wanted. They wanted a prophet to affirm their special relationship with God – but this prophet would warn them that it was they themselves who would be under God’s imminent judgement. They wanted a Messiah – but this one would be enthroned on a pagan cross. They wanted to be rescued from political oppression – but Jesus was going to rescue them from all within themselves and their traditions that kept them in captivity. Precisely because Jesus understands their deepest needs rather than what lies on the surface, he will have to say ‘no’ or ‘wait’ to the desires they are conscious of.

That’s the funny thing with prayer. Once you invite Jesus to help he will do so more thoroughly than you imagined and more deeply than perhaps you want. If you invite an accountant to help with your tax return you wouldn’t be surprised if she goes through all your other financial affairs as well to make sure everything is in order.

The story of Jesus’ dramatic entry into Jerusalem is an object lesson in the mismatch between our expectations and God’s answer. The bad news is that the crowds are bound to be disappointed. The good news is that God can defeat even the cruelty of their response and transform the outcome to redeem his world.

Take time to sit in silence

A Time of Prayer

Suffering Servant God, as I read again the story of your Passion, move my heart within me to weep over Jerusalem and all the places of conflict to mourn those who die unnoticed and to lament the damage done to your world. Stir my will to stand firm when I meet

injustice, to work for reconciliation, at home and in the world, and to transform what is into what shall be. We pray for all victims of Covid19 and all who seek to care for them, for those who cannot leave their homes and feel isolated and alone and for those whose work puts them at risk of infection.

I particularly want to pray for

Holy God, present with us now, guide me in all I do and say that it might reflect your great love for the world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

The Lord’s Prayer

Hymn: When I survey the wondrous Cross
When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er his body on the tree;
Then am I dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Pray: Jesus, I journey with you today as you journey with me. Let me go where you go.

WORSHIP AT HOME

EASTER SUNDAY, 12 APRIL 2020

The long day stretched into night and time crept onward towards the new day.

With the first gold of dawn came a resurrection, a new hope that grew with the rising sun, and went out to a waiting world.

Hymn 285: Were you there? V1-3

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble,

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble,

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble,

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Reading: Matthew 28: 1-10

Verse 4

Were you there when God raised him from the dead?

Were you there when God raised him from the dead?

Were you there when God raised him from the dead?

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble,

Were you there when God raised him from the dead?

Creator God, we praise you for the immensity of your love

-The love that brought the universe to birth;

-The love that designed and ordered our world;

-The love that breathed life into humankind.

Creator God, we praise you for the immensity of your love.

Saving God, we praise you for the endurance of your love

-The love that came to share our human life

-The love that died for us upon the cross;

-The love that triumphed over hatred and death.

Saving God, we praise you for the endurance of your love.

Strengthening God, we praise you for the power of your love,

-The love that brought your Church to life;

-The love that transforms hearts and minds;

-The love that dares and cares and unites.

Strengthening God, we praise you for the power of your love.

Jesus said, 'Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Imagine you are holding a tiny, fragile seed in your hand. Reflect on the wonder of the way in which every tiny seed has within it the potential to become an apple tree. Every apple it produces will have many seeds within it, each with the capacity to grow into a new tree until that one seed has produced a whole orchard. Now reflect on how the seeds of the



life that was in Jesus as he walked the earth in first century Palestine can now be planted into the ground of our being because of his death and resurrection. When we 'die to self' God's love can blossom and bear fruit in us, transforming our lives and spreading the seeds of healing, wholeness and hope all around.

Spend some time in quiet pondering the wonder of what God has done for us and for the whole of creation in and through Christ Jesus. Thank God for the times when God has brought new life for you out of the many little 'deaths' we experience - the things we have to leave behind in order to grow and blossom.

Affirmation of faith:

We believe in God who, when there was nothing, planted the seeds of life in all creation, green in the desert, blossoms in the trees and breath in the clay of human life.

We believe in Jesus Christ, eternal seed of life, who entered the death of our existence, trod deeply into our earthiness, took into his body all our painfulness, and lifted it into the victory of love.

We believe in the Holy Spirit who waters our grief with tears, nourishes in us the buds of life and tenderly cherishes our growings until they break forth into the fruits of hope and faith.

Time of Prayer

As we look at ourselves, the Church and the world, let us see the signs of the seeds of new life, however small.

O God, we are never without your hope of newness and resurrection.

We pray that you will take these fragile signs, seeds of our longings, and bring them to abundant life. Amen

There was darkness over the earth before creation;
There is darkness in the womb before birth;

The seed grows in darkness before it meets the light;

There is darkness in the tomb before resurrection

But now Christ is risen!

The dawn has come

A new creation has commenced,

The world is born anew.

Christ is risen!

HE IS RISEN INDEED!

Thanks be to God!

ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA! AMEN!

As you imagined that seed in your hand, so believe that the seed of life always lies within you.

HYMN: Christ is alive!

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound
to distant years in Palestine,
but saving, healing, here and now,
and touching every place and time.

In every insult, rift and war,
where colour, scorn or wealth divide,
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,
and lives, where even hope has died.

Women and men, in age and youth,
can feel the Spirit, hear the call,
and find the way, the life, the truth,
revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

Christ is alive, and comes to bring
good news to this and every age,
till earth and sky and ocean ring
with joy, with justice, love and praise.

The power of the Creator who brings life out
of death be in this place.

The risen Christ be my constant companion.
The healing embrace of the Holy Spirit
encircle me so that I see resurrection ever
about me.

Amen